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Dear Friend:

I want to thank you for contacting my office this week after receiving an automated telephone call about Social Security reform and my position on this extremely important issue. Although a member of my staff explained to you that the call was filled with distortions and did not accurately reflect my views on Social Security reform, I thought it was important to write to you to explain in greater detail my views on protecting, preserving and strengthening Social Security.

Needless to say, it is sad that an anonymous group from outside Staten Island and Brooklyn is misleading senior citizens about Social Security. The call you received is part of a nationwide campaign by this group to scare senior citizens and politicize one of the federal government's most trusted and needed programs. (You can read more about this deceitful campaign in *The Los Angeles Times*, January 28, 2005.)

Let me be clear: I do not support the privatization of Social Security. I never have and I never will.

Since I was elected to Congress in 1997, I have made a pledge to the people of Staten Island and Brooklyn: I would always support Social Security and work hard to strengthen the program for all Americans. I also made a second pledge: That I would not support any bill that would negatively affect the retirement benefits of today's seniors and baby-boomers.

I am proud to say that I have remained true to that pledge by:

- Voting to dedicate \$2.5 trillion to strengthen Social Security;
- Voting to reduce the unfair tax on seniors that penalized them for working while collecting Social Security benefits, and
- Voting to reduce taxes on Social Security benefits.

I have worked hard to keep Social Security strong for today's seniors and baby-boomers. I also have a responsibility to ensure that Social Security is stable and viable for our children, grandchildren and generations to come. That is why I believe we need to have a national debate on how we can modernize Social Security **without changing the system for today's seniors and baby-boomers. In other words, today's seniors (and baby-boomers in the years ahead) will continue to receive their monthly Social**

Security checks with no reductions whatsoever in benefits.

In the months ahead, I plan to work with Democrats and Republicans to explore ways to guarantee Social Security is strong for decades to come. For instance, we need to examine the viability of voluntary personal savings accounts in which young people would have the opportunity to invest a small portion of their savings. I want to ensure Social Security is as much a reality for them in the future as it is for seniors today.

Many Americans may already be familiar with elements of different reform plans being proposed by Democrats, Republicans and President Bush. Although no plan has been made fully public yet, they will be shortly and at that time, I intend to review them with great care. As always, I will be guided by one fundamental rule: **I will not support any bill that is not in the best interests of the people of Staten Island and Brooklyn.**

As you may know, my great-grandfather was a Member of Congress in the 1930s and voted to create Social Security. That is why I believe so strongly we must protect, preserve and strengthen the program. I intend to carry forward my great-grandfather's work by making certain that seniors, both today and in the future, can count on Social Security.

If you have any additional questions about Social Security, or if I can be of assistance to you on any other matter, please feel free to contact my office at (718) 356-8400. I want to thank you for your attention to this important matter, and I look forward to hearing from you again soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vito Fossella", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Vito J. Fossella
Member of Congress